

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OECD PARIS 12592

EXCON

E.O. 11652: XGDS1

TAGS: ESTC, COCOM

SUBJ: BELGIAN PROPOSAL ON OBSOLESCENCE

REFS: A) STATE 70982, B) OECD PARIS 11752, C) STATE

92601

1. AT APRIL 26 MEETING BELGIAN DEL STEVENS MADE HIS ANTICIPATED STATEMENT. HE SAID HIS AUTHORITIES REALIZED FROM BILATERAL CONTACTS WITH OTHER DELS THAT MAY 15 DISCUSSION WOULD ALLOW TOO LITTLE TIME FOR PRIOR CONSIDERATION OF BELGIAN PROPOSAL IN CAPITALS. BELGIUM THEREFORE PROPOSED POSTPONE DISCUSSION UNTIL SEPTEMBER, WHEN IT HOPED ALL MEMBERS WOULD BE REPRESENTED "AT HIGH LEVEL". HE SAID OBJECT OF PROPOSAL WAS TO END THE "PARALYSIS" WHICH HAD AFFLICTED THE COMMITTEE IN RECENT YEARS.

2. AFTER WELCOMING DECISION TO POSTPONE, USDEL READ INTO THE RECORD COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS CONTAINED REF A, AS AMENDED BY REFS B AND C. HE FURTHER AMENDED QUESTION G BY SUBSTITUTING PHRASE "MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT" FOR FIRST AND THIRD MENTION OF WORD "ITEMS". IN TENTATIVE REPLY, STEVENS REPEATED THAT FIRST QUESTION WAS BYPASSED BY TERMS OF FORMAL PROPOSAL AND ADDED THAT HE COULD NOT

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NOW CITE MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT THAT WOULD MEET OBSOLESCENCE TEST; THIS WOULD DEPEND ON INITIATIVES BY INTERESTED MEMBERS. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS B- F WERE RATHER VAGUE AND UNSATISFACTORY. APPARENTLY MISSING POINT OF G, HE MERELY REPEATED THAT UNANIMITY WOULD BE REQUIRED BY HIS PROPOSAL TO KEEP UNDER EMBARGO GOODS JUDGED OBSOLETE. USDEL REJOINED THAT ALL QUESTIONS WERE

HIGHLY RELEVANT AND WENT TO THE VERY HEART OF THE MATTER. HE MAINTAINED THAT THE COMMITTEE WAS ENTITLED TO AT LEAST A FEW EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT WHICH THE BELGIANS VIEWED AS MEETING OBSOLESCENCE TEST. REGARDING QUESTION G, HE POINTED OUT THAT IT POSED THE PROCEDURAL PROBLEM OF RECONCILING TWO DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED STANDARDS: UNANIMITY FOR ANY CHANGE IN EMBARGO COVERAGE (COCOM'S TRADITIONAL RULE) AND UNANIMITY TO KEEP EMBARGOED. HOW WAS THIS CONTRADICTION TO BE RESOLVED?

3. FRENCH, GERMAN, ITALIAN AND UK DELS, ALTHOUGH WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS, ALL VOICED GENERAL SYMPATHY WITH PRINCIPLE OF BELGIAN PROPOSAL, BUT WELCOMED POSTPONEMENT OF DISCUSSION. JAPANESE DEL SAID HE WOULD SUPPORT ANY IDEA TO SIMPLIFY COCOM PROCEDURES.

4. COMMITTEE THEN SET TENTATIVE DATE OF OCTOBER 3 FOR DISCUSSION, US AND NETHERLANDS AD REFERENDUM. MATTER WILL BE REVIEWED AND FINAL DATE SET AT COMMITTEE'S NEXT-TO-LAST MEETING BEFORE SUMMER RECESS, PROBABLY JULY 5.

5. COMMENT: IT WAS REGRETTABLE THAT AT THIS MEETING US-DEL WAS EXCEPTIONALLY ILL-SUPPLIED WITH INSTRUCTIONS BOTH ON CASES BEFORE THE COMMITTEE FOR FIRST TIME AND AND ON THOSE RESCHEDULED, AS WELL AS ON DUTCH PROPOSAL FOR OSCILLOSCOPES, ON WHICH THE US ALONE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO TAKE A POSITION FOR SIX MONTHS. THIS WAS EXACTLY THE KIND OF PERFORMANCE WHICH HAS CONTRIBUTED SO CONFIDENTIAL

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MUCH TO DEEP CURRENT DISSATISFACTION WITH COCOM AND HAS IN PART INSPIRED THE UK AND BELGIAN EFFORTS TO AMEND THE CRITERIA.

6. IT IS CLEAR THAT BELGIAN PROPOSAL, IF ADOPTED WOULD BE HARMFUL TO COCOM AS WELL AS VERY DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT IN ITS PROCEDURAL ASPECTS, AND THAT BELGIANS HAVE NOT REALLY THOUGHT IT THROUGH. THAT SAID, IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO IGNORE THE GROUNDSWELL OF SYMPATHY AMONG OTHER DELS FOR ALMOST ANY IDEA WHICH WILL SOMEHOW MAKE COCOM MORE FLEXIBLE AND MORE RESPONSIVE TO THEIR VIEWS.

7. REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS AS TO WHETHER OCTOBER 3 IS ACCEPTABLE FOR DISCUSSION OF BELGIAN PROPOSAL.
TURNER

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